

baps
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3 November 1981

Memorandum for : Director, FBIS
Through : Chief, Operations Group
Subject : Monthly Report--Gulf Bureau--October 1981

I. GENERAL

The bureau welcomed on board its final two monitorial candidates recruited this past summer. [redacted] STAT Armenian/Arabic, and [redacted] Arabic/Armenian, STAT EOD'd on 4 October. Both young ladies have settled in quickly and easily, and are already producing some items for wirefiling.

In a similar vein, our new Russian monitor, who EOD'd in late July, has continued his fine progress and is currently expanding his coverage load. We recently added Tehran Russian programming, taking this over from Nicosia bureau where it had been handled on an ad hoc basis by the Chief Monitor. We are also currently processing material from Tashkent and Ashkhabad Russian broadcasts, primarily economic material.

The assassination of Egyptian President As-Sadat early in the month prompted an all-out effort by the bureau to be of some help in maintaining speaker watches on Libyan transmitters. While we never became fully integrated into the watch pattern that emerged among London, Nicosia and Jordan bureaus, the entire exercise was a valuable learning experience for our relatively inexperienced Arabic monitors. Everyone now has a much clearer idea of how we are to react and conduct our operations during such crisis periods. Everyone profited--editors, monitors and teletypists.

A Headquarters auditor visited the bureau early in the month. He spent two days going over our records and found no serious problems. Two minor recommendations were made which primarily called for action by headquarters components.

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Installation of our microwave link with the embassy TCU moved forward during the month after the return from R&R of bureau engineer [REDACTED] We are looking toward a mid-to^{STAT} late November start-up.

To make room for our new monitors (four in the last 3 months) we have built additional monitoring positions in the chief monitor's old office, moving him into a new office built in a corner of our rather large reception area adjacent to the bureau chief's office. These new positions have enabled us to move three monitors out of the bureau's original, very large, monitoring booth, which at certain times of the day, was simply too crowded to work in comfortably.

Deputy Chief [REDACTED] returned to the United States^{STAT} at mid-month on emergency leave. He was gone for slightly over two weeks.

The embassy was granted permission to implement a 13.8 percent cost of living pay increase as of 18 October. Separate messages detailing the cost to us for FY-82 have been sent to E&PS.

II. OPERATIONS

A. MONITORIAL/EDITORIAL

1. The massive watch on Libyan transmitters following the assassination of Egyptian President As-Sadat provided the bureau with some crisis coverage and exposed the bureau's newer Arabic monitors to the enhanced tempo of work shifts and the different forms of processing urgent material. While reception of Libyan transmitters at Gulf was irregular and frequently too poor for us to be of much help in covering the domestic service, we were able to take some Arabic coverage from other bureaus, which enabled them to then use their monitors for the Libya watch. We took over the Arabic weeklies published in London, enabling PMU press monitors to assist Nicosia and Jordan bureaus along with several Saudi papers also normally covered by PMU. In addition, we took over coverage of two 'San'a' domestic service casts from Jordan bureau.

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2. U.S. Senate acquiescence to President Reagan's decision to sell sophisticated military equipment to Saudi Arabia, particularly the AWACS, apparently caught the Gulf area by surprise. One Gulf newspaper admitted that it had been primed to castigate the United States for failing to support the Saudi request for Arms, but was now forced to reassess the U.S. commitment to the Arab cause. Generally, the Gulf press welcomed the U.S. decision to go ahead with the sale of the AWACS as an indication of new Middle East thinking in Washington. For several days the bureau filed lengthy editorial reports on Gulf area reaction to the AWACS sale as well as statements and comments by area leaders and government spokesmen.

3. Our coverage of periodic open sessions of the Iranian Majlis carried on an FM frequency and a low powered mediumwave frequency enabled the bureau to file several reports during the month hours ahead of their appearance on later scheduled newscasts. Chief among these were reports on the nomination of Prime Minister Musavi for that position as well as the composition of his cabinet when it was presented to the Majlis for formal approval of the government.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. 13.8 percent cost of living increase was implemented on 18 October. The increase was the outgrowth of the annual wage survey conducted by the embassy this past summer.

New Teletype trainees [redacted] STAT
EOD'd during September and October respectively. Also, with the return of two other teleops from maternity leave we now have a full teletype section on duty for the first time in over six months. We are hopeful that our baby boom has subsided.

B. Buildings and Grounds.

Three new monitoring positions were being completed by month end and a new office for the chief monitor was constructed in the reception area adjacent to the bureau chief's office.

IV. VISITS

To the bureau on 12 and 13 October, [redacted] STAT
auditor from headquarters.

[redacted] STAT

Bureau Chief